

June 1997

This fall and winter, after heavy and prolonged rain, people who use the Aberdeen water supply may need to boil water before they drink it, cook with it or brush their teeth with it.

You will be notified through local media eight to 24 hours before you must begin to boil your water. The same media will tell you when the boil water advisory is lifted.

You may call Aberdeen City Hall at (360) 533-4100, to find out if it is necessary to boil your water.

Please read this publication for answers to your questions. If you still have questions, call:

- Rich Brinkman (360) 533-4100 extension 238 for water issues
- State Epidemiology at (206) 361-2914 for health issues

What media will run boil water notices?

The Aberdeen *Daily World* will run an "FYI box" on the bottom of page one every day that a boil water notice is in effect.

Three radio stations will announce boil water information every day that an advisory is in effect.

- **KBKW** (1450 AM)
- **KXRO** (1320 AM)
- **KDUX** (104.7 FM)

TCI Cablevision (channel 44) will run an information spot on days that a boil water advisory is in effect.

Why must I boil my water?

The water system uses surface water that requires filtration to remove harmful pathogens such as *Giardia*, *Cryptosporidium* and some viruses that cause diarrhea. March floods damaged the city's watershed, making the problem worse.

In addition to boiling water, you can protect your health by drinking some types of bottled water or installing certain water filters on your faucet.

Why is there a problem after a storm?

Sediment, including harmful pathogens, settles to the bottom during calm weather. Storms stir up the water, allowing sediment to be drawn into the water supply.

What pathogens are of most concern?

Cryptosporidium and *Giardia*. These one-celled parasites are in the feces of infected animals or humans. They can't be eliminated with normal chlorine treatment, especially *Cryptosporidium*.

What are the symptoms?

Cryptosporidium and *Giardia* can cause diarrhea, stomach cramps, bloating, gas, fatigue, weight loss, nausea, vomiting or a fever. Symptoms appear two to 10 days after infection and may last up to 14 days. If you are ill, see a health care provider.

Who will become ill?

Anyone who drinks contaminated water. Most vulnerable are children, the elderly and those with weakened immune systems.

How can water be used during a boil water notice?

Tap water is safe for laundering clothes, showering, or watering plants. You can bathe a baby, but do not let the baby suck a wash cloth or drink the water.

Do not use tap water for drinking, brushing teeth, preparing food or baby formula, washing fruits or vegetables, mixing fountain drinks or making ice.

Who decides when boiling is needed?

Grays Harbor Health Department, the state Department of Health and the city's Public Works Department will decide together when it is necessary to boil water.

What is the city doing to fix the problem?

The city is currently exploring options for funding and designing a new water filtration system.

The city's goal is to have the system in place by March 1999.

How can I make the water safe?

Potential for illness is low, but boiling is the best way to ensure water is free of *Cryptosporidium* and other germs. Bring the water to a rolling boil for three to five minutes. When it cools, refrigerate it in clean bottles or lidded pitchers.

Filtering tap water will collect *Cryptosporidium* and other germs, but may not be as effective as boiling. Read the water filter label. Only filters with these messages, are effective for removing *Cryptosporidium*:

- Tested and certified by NSF standard 53 for cyst removal
- Tested and certified by NSF standard 53 for cyst reduction
- Reverse osmosis
- Absolute micron size of one or smaller

To find out if a particular filter removes *Cryptosporidium*, ask NSF International (an independent testing group) for a list of Standard 53 Cyst Filters. Call 1-800-

673-8010, FAX 1-313-769-0109, write NSF International, P.O. Box 130140, Ann Arbor, MI 48113-0140.

Bottled water may be a reasonable alternative to tap water, but the origin, quality and treatment of water before it is bottled varies considerably among companies—even among brands produced by the same company.

Generally, only canned or bottled water labeled as follows is free of *Cryptosporidium*:

- Reverse osmosis treated
- Distilled
- Filtered through an absolute one micron or smaller filter

Carbonated water in cans or bottles is usually filtered or heated enough to remove *Cryptosporidium*. Fountain drinks made from tap water should be avoided during boil water notices.

Frequently asked questions:

Where does the city get its water?

Water comes from the Fairview Reservoirs. The reservoirs are fed from Malinowski Dam. There are two wooden dams above Malinowski. Floods have damaged the dams, allowing sediment to flow into Malinowski.

Why is the water so bad this year?

Floods damaged the city's watershed, possibly allowing harmful pathogens to enter the water supply. There have also been several unusually intense storms in the watershed.

What is in the water that will make me sick?

Many organisms are spread through water, but only a few cause illnesses. Of greatest concern are Cryptosporidium and Giardia.

These one-celled parasites are excreted in the feces of infected animals or humans. They are unique because they can't be eliminated with traditional chlorine treatment. Instead, they must be filtered from the water, or killed by boiling the water.

How long will the boil advisory last? Will it happen again?

As long as the threat of illness exists. Yes. Advisories will be issued whenever powerful storms or other factors threaten the safety of the water supply.

What other factors can trigger a boil water advisory?

Evidence of illness, failure of chlorination systems, a break in the water main, or acute violations of drinking water standards.

What are the symptoms of waterborne illness?

Cryptosporidium and Giardia can cause diarrhea, stomach cramps, bloating, gas, fatigue, weight loss, nausea, vomiting or a fever. Symptoms appear two to 10 days after infection and may last up to 14 days. If you are ill, see a health care provider.

I drank water without boiling it. Will I get sick?

Possibly. If you are experiencing diarrhea, stomach cramps, bloating, gas, fatigue, weight loss, nausea, vomiting or a fever,

consult your doctor. Symptoms appear two to 10 days after a person is infected and may last for up to 14 days.

Is bottled water safe?

The origin, quality and treatment of water before it is bottled varies considerably. See "How can I make the water safe" on page one of this publication.

Can I microwave the water? For how long?

Yes. It must boil for three to five minutes.

Are there filters I can buy to make the water safe to drink?

Certain filters will collect parasites and germs from the water, but may not be as effective as boiling. See "How can I make the water safe" on page one of this publication.

I boiled the water and it is still dirty. What can I do?

Boiling will kill the organisms. It is safe to drink even though it may not appear clear.

Will a baby get sick if it sucks a washcloth from the water?

Most people don't get ill, but there is a risk. If the child develops persistent diarrhea, take the child to the doctor.

The water looks much better today. Do I still have to boil it?

Yes. Organisms that may cause illness are too small to be seen by the naked eye. As long as the advisory is in effect, boil your water.

Can I use tap water for?

Showers	Yes
Ice cubes	No
Washing dishes	No
Brushing teeth	No
Coffee or tea	No
Baby's bath	Yes
Baby's formula	No
Pets	No
Vegetables and fruits	No

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